

Town of Wethersfield
Economic Development & Improvement Commission
Regular Meeting – Thursday September 13, 2007 – 12:00 Noon
Town Manager's Conference Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

1. Call To Order - Chair Betty Rosania called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.
2. Attendance and Quorum (6 members required)

Members in attendance: Chair Betty Rosania, Chris Lyons, Ken Rizzio, Howard Greenblatt, Bill Knapp, Doug Sacks, Joan Hughes and Tony Homicki.

Members absent: Joe Cornelio, Tom Dean, Chris Monroe, Chris Lyons Kate Mullen and Brian Silver.

Also in attendance: Bonnie Therrien – Town Manager, Phil Knecht – Planning and Zoning Commission Liaison and Peter Gillespie – Director of Planning and Economic Development and Paul Montinieri, Town Council.

3. Old Business

- a. Status – Redevelopment Agency – Bond Referendum – Peter Gillespie reported on the highlights of the September 5, 2007 meeting.
- b. Status Church Street/SDH Streetscape Project – Peter Gillespie reported that the Town is negotiating with Colossale Construction regarding a final price for the reduced scope of work.
- c. Website Update Status – Peter Gillespie reported that the new website will be up and running on October 1.
- d. Preserve America – Peter Gillespie reported that a draft report has been delivered and will be reviewed by the Committee at a meeting on September 19.
- e. Horse and Carriage Rides – Status – Peter Gillespie reported that the initial offer for vendors to participate went out on August 20th and no interest was received. Mr. Gillespie noted that a revised letter went out to vendors on September 10th and he is currently waiting for potential vendor response.
- f. Façade Program Promotion and PR – Betty Rosania requested that signs are placed in front of projects that have been funded through the program in order to assist with the promotion off the program.

4. New Business

- a. Greater Hartford Guest Guide 2008 – Peter Gillespie reported that Keiler hasn't submitted a revised proposal. He noted that a previous advertisement had been completed by PITA Communications for a \$600 fee. For a minimal cost, they would be willing to refine and update the ad. Mr. Gillespie reported

that ad must be completed by September 28th in order to meet the submission deadline otherwise it was indicated that the ad used previously would be reprinted.

b. Communications and Public Relations – Keiler – Chris Lyons reported that the Town has a six month contract with Keiler in which a monthly retention fee is paid. He noted that there has been communication regarding exactly what the contract entails and what projects fall within the contract as opposed to special projects. Mr. Lyons expressed the need to get together with Keiler to discuss the scope of the contract and whether there may be ramifications of them either not meeting their contractual agreements.

c. Objectives and Strategies 2007/2008 – Peter Gillespie reported that the Finance Committee had met on September 12th and agreed to reformat the Objectives and Strategies document with the intent that all the new EDIC members had a “big picture” idea of what the Economic Development Strategic Plan is. A special meeting of the Finance Committee will be held in the upcoming weeks.

d. Chamber of Commerce Liaison – Peter Gillespie reported that the EDIC is without a liaison to attend the monthly meetings of the Chamber held on the 1st Thursdays of the month at 8:30 a.m. Bonnie Therrien noted that she would ask Kate Mullen, who had previously served as Chamber Liaison, if she would be willing to fill that position.

e. Salute To Business – Chair Rosania reported that the EDIC will serve as the sole sponsor of the event.

f. Farmer’s Market – Peter Gillespie noted that potential sites previously discussed included the Nature Center, the Silas Deane Highway and the Comstock Ferre property. It was mentioned that in the past there didn’t seem to be enough local farmer’s interested in participating. He wondered if that meant inviting farmer’s from other areas and whether there was the demand needed to move forward. Joan Hughes reported that approximately ninety other towns in Connecticut host these types of events on varying scales and sell an assortment of locally made items such as jam, salsa, honey and art in addition to produce. A brief discussion ensued regarding the potential for having a point person working to organize the events and get tentative commitments from potential vendors. A consensus was made to proceed and to be placed for follow up on next month’s EDIC agenda.

g. Business Visitation – Peter Gillespie reported that other than the Town Manager and Mayor, no one is actively conducting visitations. Mr. Gillespie noted that he brought this to the attention of the EDIC to encourage everyone to try and dedicate a little bit of time to make contact with the local business community and spoke of rekindling the partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.

h. Façade Application – 912 Silas Deane Highway – Peter Gillespie reported that he had completed a status report on the Silas Deane Highway Façade Loan Program which details approved projects. Chair Rosania discussed the significant progress being made at beautifying the International House of Cosmetology property. Mr. Gillespie briefed the EDIC on available funds remaining and noted that he would ask the State to reallocate funds to provide for additional loans on the Silas Deane Highway.

i. Tax Abatement Application – Phase 2 – The Ridge at Wethersfield 295 Ridge Road – Peter Gillespie reported that this application is not complete and will be discussed at the next meeting.

5. Reports of the Town Manager -

Town Manager's Report – Bonnie Therrien reported on the following:

- Yankee Magazine planning an article
- Silas Robbins Bed & Breakfast will be featured on cover of Connecticut Home Magazine.
- Updated Blight List
- Movement of 1st & 2nd floor Town Hall operations will be temporarily moved to the Library beginning in October.
- The five year sublease of “J. Michaels Tavern” at the Standish House.

Town Council Liaison's Report - Paul Montinieri noted that he has spoken with Mayor Adil about conducting at least three additional business visitations by October 15th and reiterated the importance of fostering links with the local business community.

Planning & Zoning Commission Liason's Report - Phil Knecht reported on the highlights of the September 4, 2007 meeting.

Tourism Commission Liason's Report – Joan Hughes reported on the highlights of the August 28, 2007 meeting. Peter Gillespie noted that during the 1st weekend in October, a free /trolley shuttle service will be provided linking the Craft Show, the Silas Robbins Bed & Breakfast open house, the scarecrows on Main Street.

Director of Planning and Economic Development's Report - Peter Gillespie reported on the highlights of the Monthly Economic Development Report dated August 29, 2007.

6. Chairman's Report – Betty Rosania noted that the Silas W. Robbins House Tour will be held from October 5th – 14th.

7. Sub-Committee Reports - Marketing and Communications – There was nothing to report.

Financial Strategies- There was nothing to report.

8. Minutes- The minutes of the August 9, 2007 were not available.

9. Next Meeting – October 11, 2007

10. Correspondence-

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11. Adjournment – Bonnie Rosania adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner